

# THE FOAM RANGERS' BREWSLETTER

(for the lack of a better name suggested by you!)

A Publication of the Foam Rangers Homebrew Club



## Table of Contents

Sixth Annual Club Competition	page 2
Election Results	page 3
If It's Belgium, It Must Be Chimay	page 3
Review Of Inaugural Christmas Party	page 5
Sneak Review of the December Meeting	page 6
Preview of the January Meeting	page 6
Ask Dr. Strangebrew	page 7
Rantings and Ravings	page 8
Winning Recipes from the Second Annual Dixie Cup	page 10
Calendar of Events	page 11

Volume IV, Number 1

January, 1986

## SIXTH ANNUAL FOAM RANGERS' CLUB COMPETITION

Mark your calendar! It's competition time again. The Sixth Annual Foam Rangers' Club Competition is slated for Sunday, February 16 at the **Gingerman's Alogarden**. The first-place beers from this meet will go on to represent the Foam Rangers at the HWBTA Nationals. Scott reminds individuals that if they want to reserve a place in the nationals, be sure to save a six-pack of the brew -- three beer for the local and three for the national competition. The event begins at 1 p.m.

### **Brewsletter Editor**

*Kathy Schott*

### **Assistant Editor**

*Scott Birdwell*

### **Contributing Editors**

*Mervin "Brad" Kraus*

*Bob Capshew*



### **CLUB OFFICERS**

#### **The Grand Wazoo**

*Andy Bradley*

#### **The Secondary Fermenter**

*Mervin "Brad" Kraus*

#### **Head Bozo in Charge of Special Events**

*Scott Birdwell*

#### **Purser/Scrivner**

*Bob Capshew*

The **Foam Rangers' Brewsletter** is a monthly publication of the Foam Rangers Homebrew Club. Subscription rates are \$8.00 for one year and \$15.00 for two years. The opinions expressed are those of the editor and staff and do not necessarily reflect that of the Foam Rangers. **MOVING OR CHANGING ADDRESS? Please let us know in writing.**

We welcome letters, opinions, suggestions, articles, etc. from our readers. Correspondence and inquiries should be sent to **The Foam Rangers' Brewsletter**, c/o DeFalco's Home Wine & Beer Supplies, 5611 Morningside Dr. Houston TX, 77005 or call (713) 523-8154.

## **FOAM RANGER OFFICERS CORNERED**

Formality in the Foam Rangers? Don't worry, members won't be required to don black tie and tails to attend meetings, but the Foam Rangers have achieved an official roster of officers.

According to Bob Cashew, who turned in his first report as Secretary/Treasurer of the Foam Rangers, the December 19th meeting at Gingerman's was called to order by Don Wilson, who presented the first-ever slate of F/R officers.

After a motion for additional candidates to present themselves, the originally nominated members were unanimously "railroaded" into office by a chorus of "aye" votes, noted Capshew.

These lucky fellows include President Andy Bradley, Vice President of Meetings Brad Kraus, Vice President of Special Events Scott Birdwell and Secretary/Treasurer Bob Capshew.

Finishing out the list of specified job duties is previously appointed, Kathy A. Schott, Brewsletter Editor. She and Scott will be working together in the beginning as duties eventually slide more fully into her hands.

Capshew continued, "There are obviously many tasks that need to be done to provide everyone with the most enjoyment out of the club. The continued support of the members, and especially the 'executive group' will be essential in the coming months.

Speaking of you, the Foam Ranger member, we are publishing a membership roster, but don't have everyone's phone number. Please give your numbers to John Adams at the next meeting, or call 748-5551 with the information.

## **IF IT'S BELGIUM, IT MUST BE CHIMAY**

**By KATHY A. SCHOTT**

It's hard to imagine that just two years ago, I was Chimay-less. I had not yet come to know that fully malty taste with the slight bite of a unique yeast. It would be the fault of the Chimay that would send me on a quest for more Belgian beers.

So, reluctantly (do you really believe this?), I found myself bound for Europe and the final destination -- Belgium.

Even though Germany had its many doppelbocks and weizen beers, I lay at night dreaming of the Trappiste ales I would consume once I got to Belgium. But unfortunately, Belgium was at the tail end of the trip, and the closer I got to its brew, the closer I also got to the end of my vacation.

Finally, on a chilly and misty day in October, my traveling companion (Niall McAllister) and I pulled into a southern Belgian village, La Roche -- known as a Belgian tourist haven during the warmer months. We had the village all to ourselves -- just us and the natives. And the natives were not restless. Instead, they were merrily drinking away at various local cafes.

First, before we became inebriated at a local, we poked our head into a store to pick up cheese and beer. We found Chimay (in the small bottles) and other trappiste ales for about 50 cents a bottle. Niall tried to determine how many bottles he could sneak through customs without first breaking his back from the weight; and second, being scolded by the customs man.

One of the first trappiste ales we came to know in Belgium (besides our already friendly Chimay) was a brew called Rochefort, which we fondly dubbed "roach beer." But don't let that nickname be any indication of our opinion of this brew, because we absolutely were crazy about it.

We bought some bottles and stowed them away for the near future, and went to a cafe to try some of the ales.

The French speaking Belgians (Waloons) were quite unlike their neighbors to the south. The Belgians were extremely friendly and seemed amused to have a couple of "furiners" in their midst. They brought us some local cheese and too much beer, and stared at us once in a while as we sat and enjoyed ourselves. I discovered that the bathrooms were only "johns" with no "john-ettes" in southern Belgium. It seemed to tickle the wee man at the bar when I came back from "my journey" with a bemused look on my face. But we were drinking too much ale, so I was sure to make the journey a couple of more times.

That night (the cafe was only the evening, there was more to come), after dinner at a Frenchy place, we went back to our inn (it was the only hotel/inn/etc. open in La Roche at this off-tourist time) and sat in a glassed-in sitting room overlooking a river running through the center of town.

Niall ordered another speciality of Belgium -- Scottish Ales. He had both Martins Pale Ale and Gordon Highland Scotch Ale. The Martins Pale curiously said it was brewed in England. However, Niall (being of Northern Ireland) had never seen the label in his home country. The amazing thing was that the Belgian varieties had more true-to-form Scotch ale taste than those actually brewed in the United Kingdom.

The Belgians, as beer enthusiasts well know, are very picky about using the proper glass. So the thistle glass was the prescribed method of consumption for Gordon's.

We had to leave our little paradise in the south and move on to the big city of Brussels. This destination was an unending treasure for the serious beer hunter. We called into a place -- set up like a classy T.G.I.Fridays and soon discovered countless beer paraphernalia on the wall. This was one of those places that someone could order a 2-foot long sandwich, half-gallon ice cream float or 120 different kinds of beer. We opted for the beer.

It was here we found both Leffe Vieille Cuvée and Radieuse (the brand known to us as Abbey of Leper). We were reunited with this trappiste label which has since vanished from our Houston market.

We also saw a colorful label on the wall for GIMBERGEN -- sort of a stained glass effect with a bird of prey as the main logo. We rated it an "A" for excellent, and went on to more selections.

Foam Rangers' Brewsletter January, 1986

We also hit a sidewalk cafe where Niall enjoyed his Gueze and Kriek and I discovered the trappiste Orval, and drank some more Rochefort (which I judge even better than Chimay. Sorry, Chimay.)

Lastly, we encountered a Belgian grill and sampled pork and beef with authentic Belgian preparations. Niall saw an interesting beer on the menu -- Kwak -- and thought it might be fun to order. The waiter then brought him an hour glass-shaped container, completely oval on the bottom so that it could not stand on its own. It was set into a wooden rack which held it up. It was almost like a squatty version of a "yard of beer" (except the foot-long modell).

We also discovered one of Hoegaarden's hidden beauties -- Forbidden Fruit. Rueben's version of Adam and Eve drinking beer (instead of eating apples) is pictured on the label. Extremely potent (and passionate) brew, the M-BI people of Austin may try to introduce it to Texas this year.

Leuven (of Flemish heritage) was the final Belgian stopover before closing out a 15-day holiday. It was there that Niall tried a new Lambic Gueze called Mort Subite -- much more bitter than the Bellevue we can get here. He enjoyed the more exotic flavor of Mort Subite.

It's little wonder that many beer connoisseurs will proclaim the Belgians as the best brewers. Not only do they brew the trappiste ales, but also the bottom-fermented beers, "wild" beers, red beers, top-fermented ales, white beers and dark brown ales.

Chimay may have been the first, but...

## REVIEW OF INAUGURAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

DESPITE LITTLE ADVANCE NOTICE, THE FIRST ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY WAS HELD ON FRIDAY THE 13TH. Promoted as the social event of the year, or what was left of the year, about 25 to 30 people showed up to party and partake of munchies. There was no scarcity of chips and dips and meats and cheeses, and Scott and R.B. prepared a batch of mulled, spiced hard cider for the occasion. The cider was destined for the Dixie Cup competition, but did not make it. Scott noted that the University of Houston's sociology department was also partying at the **Gingerman's** the same evening, so it made for some crowded drinking. Much to the joy of Bob, who reported that almost his complete supply of draft beer was wiped out that evening. And, revelers also enjoyed batches of strong holiday homebrew. That's right, Foam Rangers. According to Scott, the weather was colder than blue blazes. It finally doesn't rain on an event, and all he can do is complain because it's a bit cold. There were a few munchies left over and they were taken to the December meeting. Truly a success, this will have to be an annual event.

## **SNEAK REVIEW OF THE DECEMBER MEETING**

**By BOB CAPSHEW**

The unseasonably warm fall weather ended, forcing the club inside at **Gingerman's** for the first time for the year of 1985. The December "Beer of the Month" was "holiday beer." The club members must have been good this year, because Santa Claus certainly brought some tasty brews.

Only three commercial holiday beers were available in the Houston market. The first beer sampled from this selection was *Navidad Comemorativa* by *Cerveceria Cuauhtemoc, S.A.* in Mexico (brewers of *Carta Blanca*). Comments were "tastes like corn" and "not as bad as last year." Despite not falling into the world class category of beer, the ceramic-topped, 16-ounce bottles do have an obvious appeal to homebrewers.

The second beer sampled was the perennially liked *Noche Buena*. This beer, brewed by another Mexican giant (*Cerveceria Moctezuma, S.A.*), is also known for its *Dos Equis*. Favorable comments were heard about the hoppier, maltier qualities of *Noche Buena* (over the lesser liked *Navidad*).

And from our West Coast came the 1985 *Celebration Ale* by *Sierra Nevada*. As noted in the November newsletter (page 7), the assertive hops may mellow by the time next year's brew is ready. Be sure to stash some of this brew for later.

From the Anchor Brewery, we were especially fortunate to taste some 1983 *Christmas Ale*. We also got our hands on some *Old Foghorn Barleywine*. Both of these excellent microbrewery beers have distinctive malty attributes. Unfortunately, we cannot buy these beers in Houston due to the small production. Thanks again Santa Claus for this rare opportunity.

Also much enjoyed was "*Halley's Comet Imperial Stout*," prepared by *Scott Birdwell*. Five different cans of stout extract went into the brew. The result is a rich and smooth quality, making you wish the *Halley's Comet* would return every year!

Some members also had a taste of *Brad Kraus' oatmeal stout* and *Ed "Accidental" Watt's Imperial Stout*. Both were an appropriate measure for the cold weather.

## **PREVIEW OF THE JANUARY MEETING**

Those "starkbiers" with their unusually high-alcohol contents and malty, sweet flavor will be the cause for joy at the next *Foam Rangers' club meeting* to be held at the **Gingerman's Alegarden**, Thursday, January 16, beginning around 8 p.m.

"Starkbier" is the German translation for "strong beer." Vice President *Brad Kraus* said this will include barleywines, strong ales, doppelbocks, etc.

Commercial beers may include the *Belgian Chimay Grand Reserve* and *Duvel*; the *German E.K.U. 28, Salvator* and *Spaten Munich Optimator*; the *Austrian Eggenberger Bock 23*; and the *U.S. Old Foghorn*.

## ASK DR. STRANGEBREW



O.K., boys and girls, here we go again: more letters to that sudsy sage, the homebrew guru, Dr. **Strangebrew**. What he doesn't know, he doesn't care to find out. O. J. S.

Dear Dr. Strangebrew,

What makes a Strong Brew a strong brew? When, for instance, does a pale ale cease being a pale ale and start becoming a strong brew?

Signed,  
Hair of the Dog

Dear Hair,

*This is certainly a sticky question. Obviously there is no distinct point at which a beer is automatically removed from its usual category and placed into the "Strong Brew" category. First, let's take a look at the description of these beers. The definition found in our entry packets for the Dixie Cup and the HWBTA Nationals is:*

**Strong Brews** (Including Old Ales, Barley Wines, Malt Liquor and Doppelbocks) -- Highly alcoholic (7-12%), these brews may be light or dark in color with a pronounced fruity, almost "winey" smoothness achieved through long maturation. Very complex finish.

Commercial comparisons: Watney's Stingo, E&J 28, Spaten Optimator:

*As you can see, the beer needs to have quite a kick to it to qualify. Seven percent alcohol (by volume) requires a drop of 52-53 specific gravity points. What this means is that you will have to start the fermentation at least at an S.G. of 1.065 unless you are using a lot of sugar to achieve this alcohol level (not recommended). Very strong all-malt beers (e.g. imperial stouts) can start as high as 1.110 and still not kill the yeast. For malt extract brewers, this means that you will need to add at least nine*

Foam Rangers' Brewsletter January, 1986

*pounds of extract to a five gallon recipe to get it up to 1.065. For every .007 above this point, add another pound of extract. The high alcohol levels require longer maturing periods: six months to a year. For this reason and because high concentrations of malt can make for a very sweet finish, large amounts of hops are needed to balance out the flavors (even if you are not a "hophead" like some of us!). Use 2-3 oz. of a fairly strong bittering hop, plus an oz. or two of a milder aromatic variety to finish. Obviously the higher the original specific gravity, generally the higher the alcoholic content, and the longer the maturing time and the more hops needed to balance things out. The bitterness of hops can really disappear with long aging times. Also of importance is the need to use a yeast of stronger alcoholic tolerance than beer yeast. If your O.G. is higher than 1.075 with an all-malt wort, use a champagne yeast to kick it off. Remember: Keep it clean. Smoke 'em if you got 'em. And there is simply no substitute for patience, with these beers.*

## **RANTINGS AND RAVINGS**

1. Mr. Dunderbak's in Greenspoint Mall has a very limited supply of wooden Moosehead and Grolsch crates (swingtop bottles) -- \$12.50 for the Moosehead and \$15 for the Grolsch. They do offer customers a modest break if they buy the crates full of the respective beers -- Moosehead, \$29.99; Grolsch, \$42.50.
2. Bob at Gingerman's still has a few (five or six) of the 2-liter Kulmbacher swingtop bottles (big!), \$25 each (full, of course!).
3. An Executive Board meeting is slated for Jan. 19 (i.e. all the newly and duly elected officers of the Foam Rangers, as well as anyone else interested in attending). For details, contact one of the officers at the meeting, Jan. 16.
4. Bob Capshew is interested in putting together a "breweriana (beer paraphernalia) swap" -- i.e. clocks, coasters, openers, etc. For those interested in an event of this nature, please contact him at 660-0885. He's looking at March as a possible time for this event.
5. Mervin "Brad" Kraus is trying to put together an entire year's agenda for the BOM (Beer of the Month) to print in the Brewsletter. This should give you bozo's plenty of time to come up with the appropriate homebrew for the month. This could also be very useful if we can get our mini-competitions organized, in which the club members score homebrew and commercial beers that match the BOM category every month. If you have any questions or ideas with regard to this, contact Brad.



6. The annual dues for this irregular publication are now \$8.00 per year. Check the expiration date on your mailing label. If your subscription has expired, please send us the bucks ASAP, otherwise you might be deprived (depraved?) of this monthly joy. Use the form on the inside back cover to renew.
7. If you did not get this newsletter in the mail and should have, or got it after extensive forwarding, send us the form on the inside back cover with your correct address. Some of our addresses are too current.
8. Scott Birdwell is pleased with the number of new members of the Foam Rangers. Some of these individuals (subscribing at \$8 a pop, none-the-less, to this heralded Brewsletter) include: Bob Lewis, Tim & Susan Davis, Bob Walp, Bob Capshew (!), Jim Scisson, Bruce Lyon, and Robert Lawrence. Sorry if I missed anybody. **Welcome, folks!**
9. On the other hand, we have a number of folks that have allowed their subscriptions to expire (accidentally, I'm sure . . .). While I realize that this is probably just an oversight on your part, these things cost a lot of money to print and mail (an average of 65¢ each). If you want to continue to receive this rag, you better fork over, buddy! **Check the expiration date on your mailing label. If it has been highlighted in yellow, then this is your last issue of the Brewsletter unless you do fork over.** What's even worse is that there are a number of you ("No names, please!") that have participated in club activities for quite some time and yet, have never found it in your budget to come up with the \$8. Come on, guys! You show up and enjoy the fun and maybe even pick up a freebie copy or two of the Brewsletter and still don't fork over. Eight 1986 dollars just isn't that much money and it definitely helps out your homebrew club.
10. We need contributions to the Brewsletter! Anything. . . we need cartoons, short stories, technical articles, drawings, etc. Submit your contributions to DeFalco's. Contributions on a Macintosh disk are especially welcome.
11. There has been some talk lately about possibly changing our meeting day from the third Thursday of the month to the third **Friday** of the month. Over the past five years there have been more than a few Friday morning hangovers "the day after," and it sure makes it tough to go to work with a size 12 head! Also, there have conflicts with night classes, other clubs' activities, etc. Originally we decided to go with Thursdays as it seemed to conflict least with the members' schedules, and people always seem to have things planned for the week-ends. Maybe things have changed now. Would you be willing to sacrifice (?) one Friday a month for homebrew club? Think about this idea for a while and we'll talk about it at the meeting this Thursday.

## PRIZE WINNING RECIPES FROM THE SECOND ANNUAL DIXIE CUP COMPETITION

Boy, my head is still throbbing from the strong brews we tasted at the Christmas Party and the December meeting! Now here we are asking for more. Last month we printed Steve Daniels' first place recipe. This month we are printing the second and third place recipes brewed by the Malthoppers' John "Monty" Montgomery and Kathy Schott/Niall McAllister (with some assistance from Scott Birdwell) respectively. First, Monty's red ribbon winner:

### **Monty's IPA 55 (recipe for five gallons)**

- 7 lbs. light dried malt extract (Laaglander)
- 2 lbs. lager malt grain
- 1 lb. crystal malt grain
- 2 1/2 oz. Bullion loose hops (alpha-7.8 -- boil 1 hr.)
- 1/4 oz. Kent Golding loose hops (alpha-6.0 -- boil 1 hr.)
- 1/2 oz. Cascades loose hops (alpha-5.8 -- dry hopped)
- Water treatment (1/2 tsp. gypsum & 1/2 tsp. acid blend)
- Guinness yeast
- O.G. - 1.080
- Final S. G. - 1.014

This beer was approximately 7 weeks old at the time of the competition.

Next we have Kathy and Niall's third place strong brew (Scott's recipe).

### **S.B.'s Amber Doppelbock (recipe for five gallons)**

- 6.6 lbs. Irek's Munich light malt extract
- 3 lbs. Laaglander Amber Dried malt extract
- 1/2 oz. Hallertauer hop pellets
- 1 oz. Spalt hop pellets (boil Hallertauer & Spalt for 30 min.)
- 1 oz. Tettnanger hop pellets (boil 30 more min.)
- 1/2 oz. Hallertauer hop pellets (boil 5 min.)
- 1 pkg. Bru-Vigor
- 1 pkg. Edme ale yeast
- 2/3 cup corn sugar for priming
- O. G. - 1.070
- Final S. G. - 1.018

This beer was approximately 16 weeks old at the time of the competition.

Gingerman's Ale Garden is at 5607 Morningside, next door to DeFalco's in the Rice Village. Gingerman's is generous enough to let us bring in homebrew. Lots of imported and quality domestic beers are available, so please bring a six-pack of homebrew and buy your commercial brew at Gingerman's. Thanks!

## FOAM RANGER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thurs. Jan. 16th. 8 pm	F/R January Meeting (BOM-Strong Beers) <b>Gingerman's</b>
Sunday, Feb. 16th 1 pm	<b>Sixth Annual Foam Rangers Club Competition-Gingerman's</b>
Thurs. Feb. 20th. 8 pm	F/R February Meeting (BOM-Pale Ales) <b>Gingerman's</b>
Sunday, March 2nd.	Texas Independence Day (150th Anniversary)
Thurs. March 20 8 pm	F/R March Meeting (BOM-Beers of Texas) <b>Gingerman's</b>
March ????	Breweriana Swap ????
Sat. & Sun. March 22-23	HWBTA National Homebrew Competition-St. Louis
Thurs. April 17th 8 pm	F/R April Meeting (BOM-see agenda in Feb N/L)
April 24-26	First Annual Southeastern Homebrew Competition - Gatlinburg, Tenn.
April ????	First Annual Texas Homebrew Springfest ????
Sat. May ?????	<b>Fourth Annual Foam Rangers Pub Crawl</b>

----- chop chop here -----

## I WANNA BE A FOAM RANGER!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phones: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Office: \_\_\_\_\_

new membership  address change  sample (once only, please)

Send this form with a check (payable to DeFalco's) for \$8.00 to:

THE FOAM RANGERS  
C/O DEFALCO'S HOME WINE & BEER SUPPLIES  
5611 MORNINGSIDE DR.  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77005

Foam Rangers' Brewsletter January, 1986

**FROM:**  
**THE FOAM RANGERS HOMEBREW CLUB**  
**c/o DeFALCO'S HOME WINE & BEER SUPPLIES**  
**5611 MORNINGSIDE DR.**  
**HOUSTON, TEXAS 77005**  
**(713) 523-8154**

**TO:**

**EXPIRES: 7/86**  
**Peter Lott**  
**402 West Cottage**  
**Houston, TX 77009**

